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SUBJECT: CHIVUKUVUKU: UNITA STALWART CHARTS OWN PATH TO
PRESIDENCY AND POSSIBLE PARTY SPLIT

(U) Classified by Ambassador Dan Mozena, Reasons 1.4 (b) and
(D)

¶1. (C) In a January 12 meeting with Ambassador, UNITA stalwart Abel Chivukuvuku said he envisions himself as the future president of Angola. As a first step, he intends to win the presidency of his party at its next congress, in ¶2011. If this fails, he will leave UNITA to form his own party. UNITA has become a "meaningless actor" in Angolan politics; it has lost its vision, and its leadership has likewise "lost faith in the possibility of victory." Chivukuvuku saw two possibilities for the future: one in which UNITA changes course, regains its earlier popularity, and offers a real alternative to the MPLA; or, alternatively, a more "dangerous" future in which the MPLA further consolidates power and rules unchecked until the death of President Dos Santos, which will precipitate a period of chaos.

¶2. (C) Chivukuvuku maintained he is the man to lead UNITA's renovation and said he will challenge party president Isaias Samakuva at the 2011 congress. Given his efforts to motivate his party base, Chivukuvuku said the MPLA sees his candidacy as a much greater threat than that of Samakuva and might well try to stymie it, as he believed it had at the 2007 UNITA party congress. If prevented from winning the party presidency, he said he would sever ties with UNITA and form his own party. He has already been in contact with a number of smaller parties as well as other disaffected UNITA leaders and members on the possibility of crafting a new party, if necessary. In any case, he intends to be engaged in the 2012 election, either as head of UNITA or of some yet to be created party.

¶3. (C) Chivukuvuku laid out a simple electoral strategy. There was little chance that UNITA would win elections in 2012, he said. Rather, the party should focus on generating a sense of upward movement and dynamism, sorely lacking in UNITA's last electoral campaign. Even a vote tally of 18 or 20 percent, as opposed to UNITA's 2008 ten percent showing, would create buzz. Chivukuvuku would then focus on winning elections in 2017. "UNITA," he said, "has got to be in the game."

¶4. (C) When Ambassador pressed Chivukuvuku on the specific points of his electoral platform, Chivukuvuku focused first on tactics, then cited key issues. UNITA, he said, had essentially failed in its role as opposition. He proposed that the party undertake active criticism of MPLA policies and advocated the formation of a shadow government, which would issue a critique each Thursday after the announcement of policy decisions from the regular Wednesday cabinet meeting. UNITA would call a press conference, which he conceded would likely be boycotted by the official media, and would distribute tracts by hand in areas where the independent media do not reach. He insisted that UNITA had the organizational ability to conduct such a campaign in population centers around the country. Chivukuvuku said that his campaign would focus on reconciliation and inclusion of MPLA figures in a new government and would call for an

amnesty for past corruption coupled with a crackdown on future corruption. He advocated for direct election of the president. Chivukuvuku spoke at length about his plans for developing Angola's interior, especially the country's agricultural potential. He insisted that UNITA could no longer cling to its Savimbi cult of personality and stressed that the party has to eschew tribal politics to reach the largest possible electorate.

15. (C) Comment. Chivukuvuku is an impressive leader with significant name recognition. In his early 50s, Chivukuvuku was UNITA's parliamentary leader in the late 1990s. He said he had avoided UNITA factional disputes and distanced himself from Savimbi prior to Savimbi's death. He challenged Samakuva for the party leadership in 2007 and enjoys considerable support within the party. His dynamism stands in marked contrast to Samakuva, whose pedantic, professorial style has failed to motivate UNITA. Should Chivukuvuku move forward as outlined to Ambassador, his play for UNITA leadership promises to energize the party, or break it asunder. End Comment.

MOZENA